



StarMUN 2025, ECOSOC:

Research Report on the issue of

Preventing and combating crimes that

affect the environmen

Key Terms

- *Biodiversity Crime*: Illegal activities that directly harm or exploit ecosystems, including poaching, illegal logging, and unregulated fishing.
- *Environmental Crime*: Any illegal act that directly harms the environment, including pollution, illegal waste dumping, and wildlife trafficking.
- *Greenwashing*: A deceptive practice where companies falsely promote their products or policies as environmentally friendly.
- *Interpol Environmental Crime Programme*: A global initiative supporting member countries in fighting transnational environmental crimes.
- *Wildlife Trafficking*: The illegal gathering, transportation, and distribution of animals and their products.

General Overview, Historical Context

Environmental crimes have existed for centuries but gained global attention in the late 20th century. As industrialization accelerated, so did activities like illegal logging, poaching, and toxic waste dumping. Initially viewed as isolated incidents, they are now recognized as organized, transnational crimes with grave economic, ecological, and social impacts.

The United Nations began addressing environmental concerns with major conferences like the Stockholm Conference (1972) and the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). However, the acknowledgment of environmental crime as a serious international issue only intensified in the early 2000s with increasing evidence of its ties to organized crime networks.

Root Causes

- **Weak Governance**: Lack of regulation and enforcement capabilities in many nations.
- **High Profit, Low Risk**: Environmental crimes offer high financial returns with minimal legal consequences compared to other forms of crime.
- **Corruption**: Involvement of corrupt officials who facilitate illegal activities.
- **Lack of Public Awareness**: Limited understanding of the long-term impacts of environmental crimes.

Current Situation

Today, environmental crimes are estimated to be the fourth-largest criminal enterprise globally, worth up to \$258 billion annually. They severely undermine sustainable development, threaten the rule of law, and endanger the lives of vulnerable communities. Interpol and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) report a rise in sophisticated criminal networks exploiting legal loopholes across borders.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are exacerbated by such illegal activities, putting international environmental goals like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at risk.

Timeline of Key Events

- 1972: United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm) – First global recognition of environmental protection issues.
- 1982: World Charter for Nature adopted by the UN General Assembly.
- 1992: Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro) – Agenda 21 emphasizes combating environmental crimes.
- 2000: Interpol Environmental Crime Programme launched.
- 2010: UNEP releases a groundbreaking report on the economic impact of environmental crimes.
- 2016: United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) adopts resolutions focusing on environmental governance.
- 2022: UNODC publishes "World Wildlife Crime Report", highlighting trends and impacts.

Major Parties Involved

Countries

- Brazil: Struggles with illegal logging and mining in the Amazon; actively seeks international cooperation.
- China: Largest market for trafficked wildlife but also increasingly involved in enforcement efforts.
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Critical biodiversity hotspot heavily affected by poaching and illegal mining.
- United States: Major funder of global anti-poaching and anti-trafficking initiatives; strict domestic laws like the Lacey Act.
- Norway: Supports environmental crime prevention globally, especially through funding and technical assistance.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- World Wildlife Fund (WWF): Focuses on anti-poaching and habitat protection.
- Greenpeace: Advocates against illegal fishing and logging, exposing corporate violations.
- Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA): Conducts undercover investigations into environmental crimes.

Possible Solutions

Strengthening International Law and Cooperation

- Expand treaties like CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) to cover broader environmental crimes.
- Increase funding and mandate for agencies like UNODC and Interpol to track and dismantle criminal networks.

Capacity Building in Developing Countries

- Invest in training for law enforcement and judicial officials.
- Support the development of modern tracking technologies such as satellite imaging and AI to monitor protected areas.

Enhanced Sanctions and Penalties

- Introduce stronger legal penalties for environmental crimes, making them comparable to those for drug trafficking or arms smuggling.

Public Awareness and Education

- Launch global campaigns to educate consumers about illegal wildlife products and deforestation-linked goods.
- Promote youth involvement in environmental protection through education initiatives.

Corporate Accountability

- Encourage mandatory environmental reporting for multinational companies.
- Establish international certifications for sustainably sourced products.

Further Reading

- United Nations Environment Program: "The State of Knowledge of Crimes that have Serious Impacts on the Environment"
- INTERPOL-UN Environment: "Strategic Report on Environmental Crime"
- UNODC: "World Wildlife Crime Report"
- CITES Official Website: www.cites.org
- WWF Living Planet Report 2022

Conclusion

Environmental crimes not only destroy ecosystems but also destabilize societies and economies. By equipping delegates with a nuanced understanding of historical developments, root causes, and potential solutions, this report aims to foster informed and constructive debate at ECOSOC. Through collective and coordinated action, we can pave the way toward safeguarding the environment for future generations